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SENSITIVE
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TAGS: AMGT CASC KFLU PINR PREL AL
SUBJECT: 16 CONFIRMED CASES OF H1N1 VIRUS IN ALBANIA

REF: TIRANA 482

¶1. (SBU) Four new cases of the H1N1 virus were confirmed on August 18, bringing the total number of reported cases in Albania to 16. Two of the 16 cases have been children. In a recent development, Albania has begun to treat suspected cases with Tamiflu. H1N1 symptoms have been relatively mild in Albania, and there may be cases that have gone unreported.

The number of suspected cases sent to Romania for testing has been increasing in recent weeks. Samples must be sent to Romania because Albania does not have the capacity to confirm suspected cases through testing. According to the Institute of Public Health, approximately 15 samples are sent daily to Romania for testing. This recent increase could be a result of increasing H1N1 infections in the country, increased testing, or an increase in patients seeing doctors due to recent press coverage.

¶2. (SBU) The Institute of Public Health is currently attempting to secure USD 3 million to obtain enough vaccine for 300,000 people. The new vaccine is currently being developed and is expected to become available in October. According to health officials, this is the minimum amount necessary to cover the basic needs of the population. The GOA has stated publicly that it cannot fund such a purchase and will seek assistance from the World Bank or the World Health Organization.

JONES